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Russia's Massive Campaign to Blacken U.S. Image

An official report bares inner workings of Moscow's global propaganda network. Lies, forgeries, unsuspecting dupes and "fronts" are used to defame America.

The Soviet Union is speeding up expansion of its already massive propaganda war against the United States.

That is the warning from the Central Intelligence Agency, as made public in late July by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

According to the CIA:

- Russia spends at least 2 billion dollars a year to spread pro-Communist and anti-U.S. propaganda through a worldwide network that includes international front organizations controlled by the Kremlin.

- There are "recent indicators that the Soviets intend to place increasing reliance on propaganda and particularly to intensify their propaganda against the United States."

This heating up of the Kremlin's cold war of words is seen as another blow to the already damaged détente that was supposed to bring a relaxation of tensions between the superpowers.

The report by the CIA was prepared at the request of Representative John M. Ashbrook (R-Ohio), a member of the House Intelligence Committee. It dealt only with Soviet propaganda operations in other nations, not in the United States, because the CIA is barred from engaging in counterintelligence activities in America.

The CIA recommended, however, that Congress investigate Moscow's operations in the U.S., saying that "some of the evidence presented in this paper suggests that such a study would be worthwhile."

"At highest levels." Describing the Soviet propaganda as a mixture of "exaggeration, innuendo and outright falsehood," the CIA gave this summary of Moscow's aims and methods:

"Propaganda campaigns are planned and directed at the highest levels of the Soviet regime. The fundamental aims of Soviet propaganda directed abroad are to weaken the opponents of the U.S.S.R. and to create a favorable environment for the execution of Soviet policy.

"The primary target of Soviet propaganda abroad is the United States; Soviet propaganda seeks to isolate the United States from its allies and to create a worldwide image of the United States as aggressively 'imperialist' and 'racist.'"

"Specifically, show that U.S. military spending and

weapons development make this country the major threat to world peace."

Recent examples cited by the CIA: The Russians originated a worldwide campaign against U.S. production of the neutron bomb. Moscow tried to paint the kidnap-murder of Italian politician Aldo Moro last spring as the handiwork of the CIA. And Soviet agencies have accused the U.S. of conspiring to help West Germany become a major nuclear-missile power.

Key elements. To carry out their propaganda programs, the CIA asserted, "the Soviets have developed a worldwide network of assets second to none." As components in that network, the CIA listed:

- A short-wave broadcasting system that beams programs to virtually every country, using 84 languages.

- Two news agencies, Tass and Novosti (APN), that are supplying services to scores of countries—often free of charge.

- More than 75 Communist parties outside the Soviet bloc, with a total membership of more than 3.5 million.

- Dozens of international "Communist fronts" posing as independent organizations but actually "funded and controlled by the Soviets." (The 13 major fronts are shown on page 43.)

- Nearly 500 Soviet newsmen working abroad, "many of them Soviet intelligence officers," and all of them "as much employees of the Soviet state as a Soviet consul or ambassador."

- The state security organization (KGB), which secretly supplies money to foreign politicians, forges documents and sends "influence agents" into many countries.

With these agencies, plus the intelligence services and propaganda resources of Cuba and the Communist nations of Eastern Europe, the CIA said, "the Soviets are able to orchestrate propaganda campaigns on a worldwide basis with relative ease."

The role of fronts. Communist-front organizations are described in the report as "major propaganda weapons"—especially effective in creating "public support for Soviet policies among the unsuspecting." These groups also serve as recruiting grounds for intelligence agents, the CIA said.

The drive soon moved into Western

most important Soviet front." And the World Federation of Trade Unions is listed as "the largest and one of the most active" fronts.

The World Youth Festival now being staged in Havana is cited as a front-group activity, sponsored by the International Union of Students and World Federation of Democratic Youth.

The CIA charged that Russia is expanding its use of forged documents to discredit Washington. Most of the recent forgeries, the agency said, "have been alleged copies of official U.S. government documents which contain demeaning references to friendly governments." One was described as a forged release of the U.S. Information Service "containing a spurious speech by President Carter which implied that the U.S. was exerting heavy pressure on the Greek government with respect to Greece's relationship with NATO."

A theme that is found over and over in the propaganda, the CIA report said, paints the United States as "the devoted friend of conservative or right-wing regimes" and "unsympathetic to the needs and ambitions of the Third World" of underdeveloped nations.

The most widely reiterated theme centers on American weapons development. Said the CIA: "Since World War II, the Soviets have campaigned vigorously against virtually every major U.S. weapon. The atom bomb itself was a target of Soviet propaganda until the moment the Soviets acquired their own atomic capability."

Details of three drives. To demonstrate how the campaigns are waged, the CIA gave a detailed history of three such efforts, including the one aimed at the neutron bomb. According to the agency:

"The earliest sustained propaganda on the neutron bomb originated exclusively from the Soviet Union" in July and August of 1977, and "the Soviets escalated this attack in later weeks to support the propaganda campaign as it got under way elsewhere." Russia described the bomb as "the ultimate capitalist weapon, one which killed people but left property intact."

From Moscow, the CIA related, the antibomb campaign spread across Eastern Europe, where it "was massive, well organized and faithfully mirrored the Soviet effort. It employed all channels of public communication: press, radio, television, petitions, public letter writing and demonstrations."

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